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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: November 29, 1967

SUBJECT: GUATEMALA: Current Political Situation

PARTICIPANTS: Carlos M. Simons, of Guatemala
Carlos Padilla
MTD - Mr. Maynard King, Guatemala Desk Officer

COPIES TO: AMB
ARA - Mr. Hoyt
IRC (2)
Amembassy Guatemala

DECLASSIFICATION DATE 6/4/75
PER Fambros OFFICE ARA
FADRC FOI CASE NO. S-B201

(Mr. Simons said that he had previously been in politics in Guatemala and had spent some years in exile during the Arbenz regime. He said he works for the Novela cement factory in Guatemala City. Mr. Padilla said he has lived in Washington for some years and is the son of Dr. Carlos Padilla y Padilla).

Mr. Simons said he was very concerned about the present indecision and lack of leadership in the anti-Communist camp in Guatemala. He said that he was not for General Ydigoras nor for any particular candidate so long as a strong anti-Communist candidate capable of winning the elections emerged from the present situation.

Mr. Simons said that General Ydigoras was still strong but that he and an additional Presidential candidate from the centrist coalition would be defeated by a candidate of the PR. He said that the MDN was so disliked that no candidate backed by it could win, even if the MDN were to disguise itself under another name. He said that the "church people" in Guatemala were so opposed to Ydigoras and to the MDN that they would cut of spite vote for the PR if candidates of conservative groups who were acceptable to them were not put up. He dwelt at some length on the dangers of the present aimless drift of the various anti-Communist groups in Guatemala.

Mr. Simons said that the American Embassy in Guatemala could play a constructive role in this crisis. He said the Embassy discreetly could hold conversations with Cruz-Salazar, Peralta and Ydigoras to impress upon them the importance of uniting the anti-Communist forces. He said he realized this presented a problem in view of the strong ambitions of the various aspirants for the presidential office.

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Mr. King said the Department appreciated hearing the views of Mr. Simons. He said the Department was following with the closest interest developments in Guatemala, and he stressed the importance the Department attaches to a strong anti-Communist winning the forthcoming elections.

ARA:WHDunkinson
12/2/57

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